

*How can I present my thoughts clearly?*

*How can I use a formal model of writing to persuade my reader?*



*Where do I start?*

# A guide for: **Essay Writing**

Grade 8 Model



*What's a control statement?*



*How do I argue my point?*

How can I effectively utilize my research?

# Essay Writing Organizer

Opening Quote  
(The Tone)

Introduction  
(The Context)

1.  
2.  
3.

The Transition:

4.  
5.  
6.  
7.

The Thesis  
(and the 3 control statements)



Control Statements  
(The Arguments)



1.

Quotes/References:

*Light*

2.

Quotes/References:

*Medium*

3.

Quotes/References:

*Heavy*

Summary

# What's an Essay?

Three types of essays commonly explored in English composition classes include **cause and effect**, **compare and contrast**, and the **persuasive** essay.



## Cause and Effect

A **cause and effect** essay attempts to determine objective reasons that answer “why” about a question. While more than one answer is always possible, the writer attempts to present the most logical explanations for the subject at hand.

- Select a subject by asking, *Why?* Remember to consider the length of your assignment.
- Test each hypothesis to determine which answers “*Why*” to your specific question. Arrange the explanations in the best order for the desired effect: e.g., chronological or reverse; effect before cause; cause before effect.



## Compare and Contrast

A **compare and contrast** essay presents similarities and differences between two subjects, items, or topics. You may either examine the features of the two subjects without making any judgments, or you may point out advantages and/or disadvantages of each with the intention of making a choice between them. Comparative essays may discuss similarities or differences arranged in the order the writer chooses. No particular number of main points is required.

- Always choose two subjects that have enough basis for comparison to cover the required essay length. A common essay length is approximately 500 words and requires at least three ways in which the subjects are alike or different. Your thesis should tell the reader exactly what you are going to compare or contrast.



## Persuasive Writing

The purpose of **persuasive** writing is to assert an opinion which you are going to defend and to offer supporting evidence (data) in order to convince the reader to agree with you. In the process, you deal with **opposing views**, thus convincing him/her of the **superiority** of your argument. Additionally, a good writer may present emotional as well as rational appeal. All of your reasoning should lead to a logical conclusion. If your subject matter warrants a change, you will offer a solution to the status quo in a proposal. In some cases, a quote is used at the beginning to set the mood or tone.

- While not all persuasive essays include documentation, secondary writing will require research. By investigating your topic and including supporting comments from authorities, you give credibility to your argument. It is also very important that you prepare a correctly formatted **reference** section and **end note** page.

*You will be crafting a persuasive essay for this final term of Grade 8.*

# The Essay: An Overview



## INTRODUCTION

When writing the introduction to your essay, you should begin with a statement that is very general and is beyond argument. The statements which follow should begin to suggest your point of view. You are now writing leading statements designed to lead the reader naturally to your thesis. Each statement should suggest more of your point of view than the first. Now add your thesis.



## THE BODY OF THE ESSAY

The body of the essay will contain several well-argued paragraphs designed to convince the reader that your point of view is absolutely the right one!! These paragraphs will be constructed according to the requirements specified in the evaluating your essay rubric - each containing all the required elements.



## SUMMARY

The summary of your essay should be designed so that your reader is challenged to think about or reflect upon your point of view. This should be done through a series of reflective statements which use your thesis as a starting point, but then depart from it forcing the reader to consider other dangers, effects, ramifications. You want to “shake” the reader and convince him/her of the urgency and/or necessity of adopting your point of view.

# The Introduction: Setting the Tone

As noted above, when writing the introduction to your essay, you should begin with a statement that is very general and is beyond argument. Ultimately, your goal is to set the stage for which your arguments will be subsequently presented. Introductions also:

- set the tone or mood of the essay
- give a historical, political, demographic (now there's a word!), social, economic context
- lead into the thesis

Here's a sample of a basic introduction for a persuasive essay. It can be broken down as follows:

- Universal
- Transition
- Thesis

What is meant by a universal and transitional sentence?

## INTRODUCTION

### UNIVERSAL

1. For thousands of years people have been concerned about their appearance.
2. Humans have created jewellery, painted their bodies and experimented with colours and dyes in order to appear "better".
3. A hundred years ago tattoos came into fashion along with the wearing of expensive furs.

### TRANSITION

4. A long time ago people didn't spend the kind of money they do today on fashion.

5. The fashion industry today is a billion dollar business selling products ranging from blue jeans to hair gel.
6. Many young people purchase these items, and one of the most popular is hair care products.
7. Sometimes this is not good.

### THESIS

Kyle's hairstyle is appalling due to its ragged look, ability to cut vegetables with its sharp edges and its oodles of greasy hair gel.

# The Introduction: Setting the Tone (continued)

*Here's an example of how the introduction is "put together" so to speak. Take a special note at the transition words/phrases such as "On occasion", "Though". In some respects, this form of writing shares attributes with narrative writing. How so?*

"Since the dawn of time, humans have suffered from forms of discrimination. Within all cultures, the element of diversity has been countered by those who believe all human beings should share common values, beliefs and dreams. On occasion, these conflicts have been taken too far, by individuals who believe themselves to be the perfect leader for humanity. In Salem, innocent women were slaughtered mercilessly, burned at the stake, as part of the ludicrous Witch Trials. Another instance was during World War II, when Adolph Hitler tried to exterminate Jewish people, using mass murder techniques such as gas chambers and horrendous furnaces to incinerate bodies. Though all of this was in the past, the path humans are facing now leads to many shadows of prejudice. Our society today encourages all types of persecution, whether it be against race, gender, age, religion or other arbitrary differences. One of the most heinous aspects of persecution is violence against homosexuality. **It is abhorrent that verbal abuse, violence and other forms of gay-bashing are promoted through media induced stereotypes, sheer intolerance and conflicting religious beliefs.**"

Break it down here:

Transition:

Thesis:

## References and End-Notes:

As you know, a well supported piece of writing or even a speech makes the author more credible. You've seen several examples this year of students who have shared their thoughts, opinions and arguments on a topic and then supported their claims with actual evidence. It makes for a better argument overall.

Here's how to format your reference if you are using a journal or article:

**Sarkar, M., (2002) "The Times and Life of Hairpieces"., Journal of Natural Science. Toronto: Edison Press, pp. 202 - 204**

Here's how to format your reference if you are using a book resource:

**Sarkar, M., (2002) Journal of Natural Science. Toronto: Edison Press, pp. 202 - 204**


Here's how to format your reference if you are using a web resource:

**Sarkar, M., (2002) "The Times and Life of Hairpieces"., World Book. Toronto: Edison Press, <http://www.worldbook.com/hairpieces.htm>**

It is important to give the most recent date because....well.....maybe you can tell me?

## Rubrics and Assessments:

General Overall Rubric:

<b>Essay Rubric (Final)</b>		Date of Assessment: _____			Term: <b>1 2 3</b>
<b>Skills</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Overall:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use the specialized vocabulary appropriate to the topic in written presentation</li> <li>• formatting of essay meets APA guidelines, including correct notation, citing of references, spacing, title page</li> <li>• thesis presents main argument and is followed through with supporting examples presented as "controls"</li> <li>• summary ties in key points from main control statements</li> </ul>	<p>Highly effectively with a strong degree of creativity, expertise and confidence</p> <p>Exceptionally clear, vivid and flowing well from intro. Excellent links from one idea to another</p>	<p>Effectively with a degree of creativity, expertise and confidence</p> <p>Very clear and flows well from intro. Good links from one idea to another</p>	<p>Somewhat effective with some degree expertise; yet lacking in creativity</p> <p>Somewhat unclear and does not flow well from intro. General links from one idea to another</p>	<p>Not effective</p> <p>Inconsistently and with limited understanding</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> 

## Assessment of Introduction:

	4	3	2	1
introductory sentence	introductory sentence promises to discuss the main idea and is broad and general; does not encourage argument; excellent use of descriptive words and creative ideas	introductory sentence promises to discuss the main idea and is broad and general; does not encourage argument; good use of descriptive words and creative ideas	introductory sentence promises to discuss the main idea and is general; does not encourage argument; attempts to make use of creative ideas and phrases	introductory sentence promises to discuss the main idea and is general; does not encourage argument; no attempt to make use of creative ideas and phrases
leading sentences	sufficient number of leading statements are used to fluently lead to thesis; creative ideas are highly sequenced to lead naturally to thesis	sufficient number of leading statements are used to fluently lead to thesis; creative ideas are sequenced to lead naturally to thesis	satisfactory number of leading statements are used to fluently lead to thesis; attempts to sequence creative ideas to lead naturally to thesis	needs to use more leading statements to lead to thesis; weak sequence of ideas leads awkwardly to the thesis
sequenced leading statements	each leading statement becomes more specific and very clearly specifies point of view contained in the thesis	each leading statement becomes more specific and clearly specifies point of view contained in the thesis	a satisfactory number of leading statements become more specific and attempt to specify point of view contained in the thesis	very few leading statements become more specific and poorly attempt to specify point of view contained in the thesis



# Assessment of Thesis:

	4	3	2	1
The thesis obligates (topic)	promises the reader to discuss only one main idea; that main idea is clearly defined	promises the reader to discuss only one main idea; that main idea is satisfactorily defined	promises the reader to discuss only one main idea; attempts to define main idea	promises the reader to discuss only one main idea; but the main idea is unclear
The thesis predicts (choose a side)	predicts the direction the essay will take; clearly presents point of view or argument	predicts the direction the essay will take; satisfactorily presents point of view or argument	predicts the direction the essay will take; attempts to present point of view or argument	vaguely predicts the direction the essay will take; point of view or argument unclear
the thesis controls (three)	direction essay will take is clearly defined because controls are clearly defined; controls agree with main topic	direction essay will take is satisfactorily defined because controls are satisfactorily defined; controls agree with main topic	attempts to define the direction the essay will take because there is an attempt to indicate controls; controls agree with main topic	direction essay will take is poorly defined because all or most of the controls are not indicated; controls are not indicated; controls do not support the main idea
value words	value word(s) is/are appropriate and forcefully beg an argument	value word(s) is/are satisfactory and beg an argument	attempts to use satisfactory value words; attempts to beg an argument	value word(s) is/are weak and/or inappropriate; only weakly beg(s) an argument
effective use of language	word choice is extremely accurate, specific, clear, precise, extremely persuasive	word choice is generally accurate, specific, clear, precise, generally persuasive	attempts to use accurately use words which are specific, clear, precise and persuasive	word choice lacks accuracy; it is difficult to interpret how the thesis persuades

# The Thesis: Your argument you say?

Guess what? You already know what this is. Yup. It essentially is a promise. Remember that? What is a promise's job? To take a stand. It's assertive, pulls no punches, knock you socks off statement of intent.

A thesis is a little more than that. It is a promise AND a reminder all rolled into one. It is important that you craft a solid these because your WHOLE essay rests upon it. Let's have a look: (sample format only)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ because (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ due to (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ on account of it being  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis statements **predict** and **obligate and control**. What does that mean? \_\_\_\_\_

Ok. How is a thesis similar to a reminder? It provides \_\_\_\_\_ controls (you remembered those being called "examples" from your structured paragraphing days. 'Member?

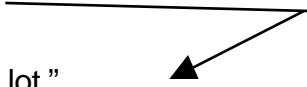
Your THESIS:

\_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ on account of it being/because/  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
b (c) \_\_\_\_\_

# The Thesis: More practice

Thesis statements **predict** and **obligate and control**. What does that mean again?

Check this out:



“Teenagers date a lot.”

**How does this statement predict?**

“Today teenagers date at an earlier age than their parents did because of earlier onset of physical maturity, media induced sophistication and easier access to safe venues for enjoyment.”

**How does the statement predict, obligate and control? What are the 3 “controls” of this thesis statement?**

Here's another:

“Teenagers are interested in fashion.”

**How does this statement predict?**

“Teenagers are interested in fashion as a form of social expression reflecting individuality, specific group acceptance and attitude toward social protest and rebellion.”

**How does the statement predict, obligate and control? What are the 3 “controls” of this thesis statement?**

One last one:

“It's appalling that Twinkies are the food choice of many North American teenagers because consumption of this product leads to health problems such as obesity, skin problems and malnutrition.”

# Essay Topics: Canadian Confederation

